REMARKS

Claims 7-12 are pending in the present application. None of the claims were amended in this response. Applicants note that the Office Action lists claims 7-9 as pending in the present application. However, in the Preliminary Amendment dated August 26, 2002, claims 1-6 were canceled and replaced with new claims 7-12. If this claim listing does not comport with the PTO records, Applicant encourages the Examiner to contact the undersigned to resolve this issue. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Sands* (U.S. Patent 5,889,837). Applicant respectfully traverse this rejection.

Specifically, Sands fails to teach or suggest the features of "providing a digital signal processor on at least one of a subscriber-line-specific basis and a small group of subscriber line circuits; providing, via the digital signal processor, subscriber-line functions related to telecommunications traffic; [and] carrying out, via the digital signal processor, a plurality of different test functions to obtain test result data in order to identify malfunctions substantially all the time, automatically and successively" as recited in independent claim 7. The claimed configuration is generally directed to a DSP arranged on specific subscriber lines or a small group of subscriber line circuits, where the DSP provides subscriber-line functions related to telecommunications traffic and performs tests to determine malfunctions automatically and successively. Because of the higher processing speed of DSP's, they can perform all the codec/filter functions for several subscribers as well as other multiple applications.

In contrast, Sands discloses a conventional configuration, where digital codecs and analog filters are used for each specific telecommunication traffic function, and a decentralized testing configuration is used via relays and microprocessors to determine errors (see Abstract, col. 2, line 22 - col. 3, line 10). Unlike this configuration, the use of DSPs remove the need for dedicated relays and separate test circuits, and further perform the testing automatically and successively, making test result data available almost all the time.

Sands demonstrates in FIG. 13 that a test circuit 750 is connected across two telephone lines 725 and 728 of a subscriber terminal 20 by means of a relay 752, and is left in a permanent or continuous connection until it is desired to test the other telephone line 728 or 725 (col. 12 lines 63-65; col. 13, lines 39-44). The analog test circuit 750 is shown in more detail in Fig. 14,

and a microcontroller 790, shown in Fig. 15, are connected to the test circuit. On each telephone line (725, 728) a codec (702, 705) is connected to a subscriber line circuit (SLIC) 711, 712, which in turn is connected to the respective telephone line 725, 728 (col. 13, lines 3-21; see FIG. 13).

As mentioned above, Sands describes a codec/filter arrangement with use of a microprocessor and a relay to connect to the subscriber line. Sands, however, does not teach a digital signal processor performing the steps recited in the present claims. The Office Action refers to FIG. 3A, which discloses a modem shelf 46 on the central terminal 10 shown in FIG. 3 (col. 5, lines 23-45, 60-65). The central terminal 10 is connected via wireless transmission to the subscriber terminals 20, as shown in FIG. 1 (col. 5, line 60 - col. 6, line 24). However, it is not understood how the modem shelf can be interpreted as a DSP; indeed, Sands discloses the use of a digital signal processor 258 to control the phase of a slave code sequence through a code tracker 260 and a carrier tracker 262 (col. 11, lines 59-61; col. 12, lines 4-22). The communication controller in the subscriber terminal 20 enables wireless communication with the central terminal 10, but the digital signal processor 258 is used only for wireless communication, and not for testing and identifying malfunctions on the subscriber lines.

Furthermore, the wireless communication between the central terminal 10 of Sands and the subscriber terminals 20 is generally described (col. 6, lines 25-40), but none of the subscriber line functions related to telecommunication traffic and provided by the digital signal processor are taught or suggested. Also, Sands teaches that a random access memory 278 stores system parameter information for subsequent insertion through an arbitrator 280 in the event of link loss in order to reestablish links (col. 12, lines 17-21). However, the random access memory 278 is merely a memory for ensuring that the wireless link between the subscriber terminal 20 and the central terminal 10 is maintained, but does not teach a central point as claimed in the present application, where test result data of several subscriber line units is gathered.

Moreover, Sands discloses that the test circuit 750 is connected across two telephone lines (725, 728) using relay 752 (col. 13, line 38-col. 14, line 14). This disclosure is not related to the transmission of test result data from a central point back to the subscriber access area, where test result data has previously been transmitted from the subscriber access units to this central point. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket no. (0112740-201) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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